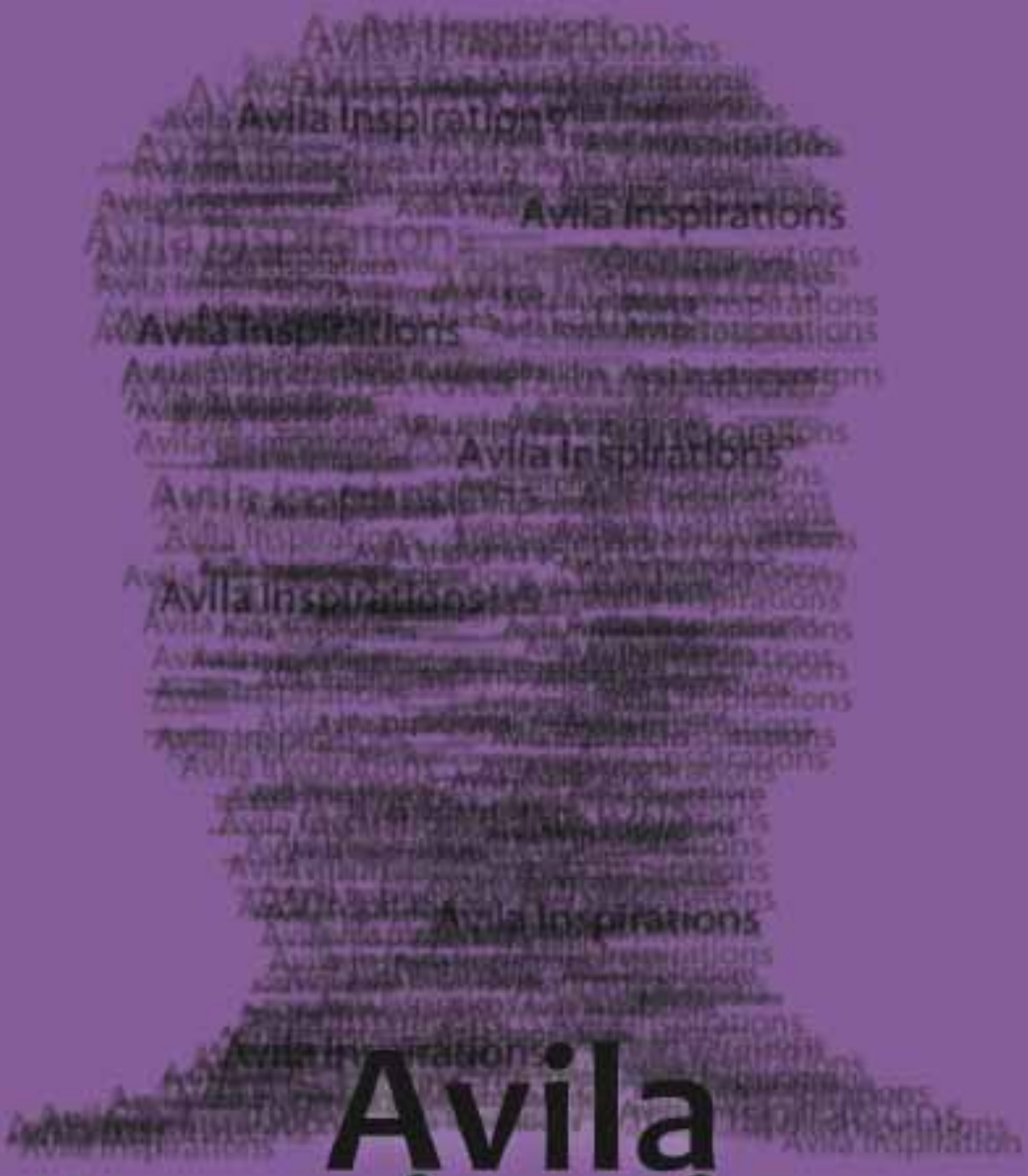
TALON

Special Edition



Avila Inspirations

Miller Time: Te

By James Chapman

You might wonder: who is Tom Miller? If you have not met him, put it on your bucket list. Tom Miller is the Assistant Baseball Coach at Avila University, and has been for the last 10 years. Coach Miller focuses mainly on working with the pitching staff and has been successfully developing kids into reaching their potential on the baseball diamond. A standout athlete himself, Miller pitched at Ohio University and was selected by the Boston Red Sox organization in the 1997 Major League Baseball draft. He was also able to reach the Triple A level with the San Francisco Giants. I have been given the opportunity to listen and soak up the knowledge of Coach Miller in my first year here at Avila, and I was also able to snag him for an interview:

James Ch
Tom Mill
believe it o
JC: If you
TM: Toein
JC: Give m
right now?
TM: At co
friend's hou
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watching a
the families
JC: If you
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TM: Not
JC: If you
TM: I'll tal
JC: If you
TM: So m
well.
JC: You're
TM: Eithe
JC: Favorit
TM: Very
JC: Favori
TM: Capta
JC: Who d
TM: My pa

Jake Wood (Senior): "Tom is an intellectual at heart with a pure natural athletic ability to throw a baseball"

n Questions with Tom Miller

napman: What is your greatest accomplishment in life?
ler: Becoming a father. After baseball was done, that's what I wanted to do
r not, and it is what I have become.
could do anything in life right now, what would it be?
g the hill for the Detroit Tigers at their next home game.
ne a typical Saturday night in college for you, and then a typical Saturday night
Out of baseball season of course
ollege it was going to the Ohio University football game, heading back to a
use and then later, probably attending 1 of the 22 bars next to campus to
t for the rest of the night. But right now, it's hanging out with my son, August,
movie with my wife, or on the occasion attending a neighborhood party with
s around the area.
were hanging out with Charlie Sheen this weekend, what would you guys be

staying at home watching a movie, that's for sure.
had to fight Chuck Norris or Arnold Schwarzenegger, who do you choose?
ke Arnold. I'm not messing with Chuck.
were a rapper, what would your name be?
any names to choose from, but I would probably go with "Frecks". It suits me

on death row, what is your last meal?
r a really good burger or pizza. And top that off with a warm cinnamon roll.
e song?
tough question. But I would say, "Another One Bites the Dust" by Queen.
te superhero growing up?
ain Planet
id you look up to as a kid growing up?
arents and siblings. They did a great job as being role models for me.

Miller has been a role model for many, but most importantly he has been a loyal coach to Avila University and Head Baseball Coach, Ryan Howard. Coach Miller has continued his reputation as a responsible, intelligent, and caring individual who provides a great atmosphere for athletes in Kansas City. He is not just another coach, but a friend and mentor, and an asset to the Avila Community.

Nick Nichols (Senior): "Tom is a quiet leader, meaning he leads by example."

Nathan Bacon (Junior): "Tom Miller is a man who puts his heart and soul into Avila baseball and would do anything for the guys on the team. His passion is best displaced when our backs are against the wall."

All about Becky: Circulation is in he

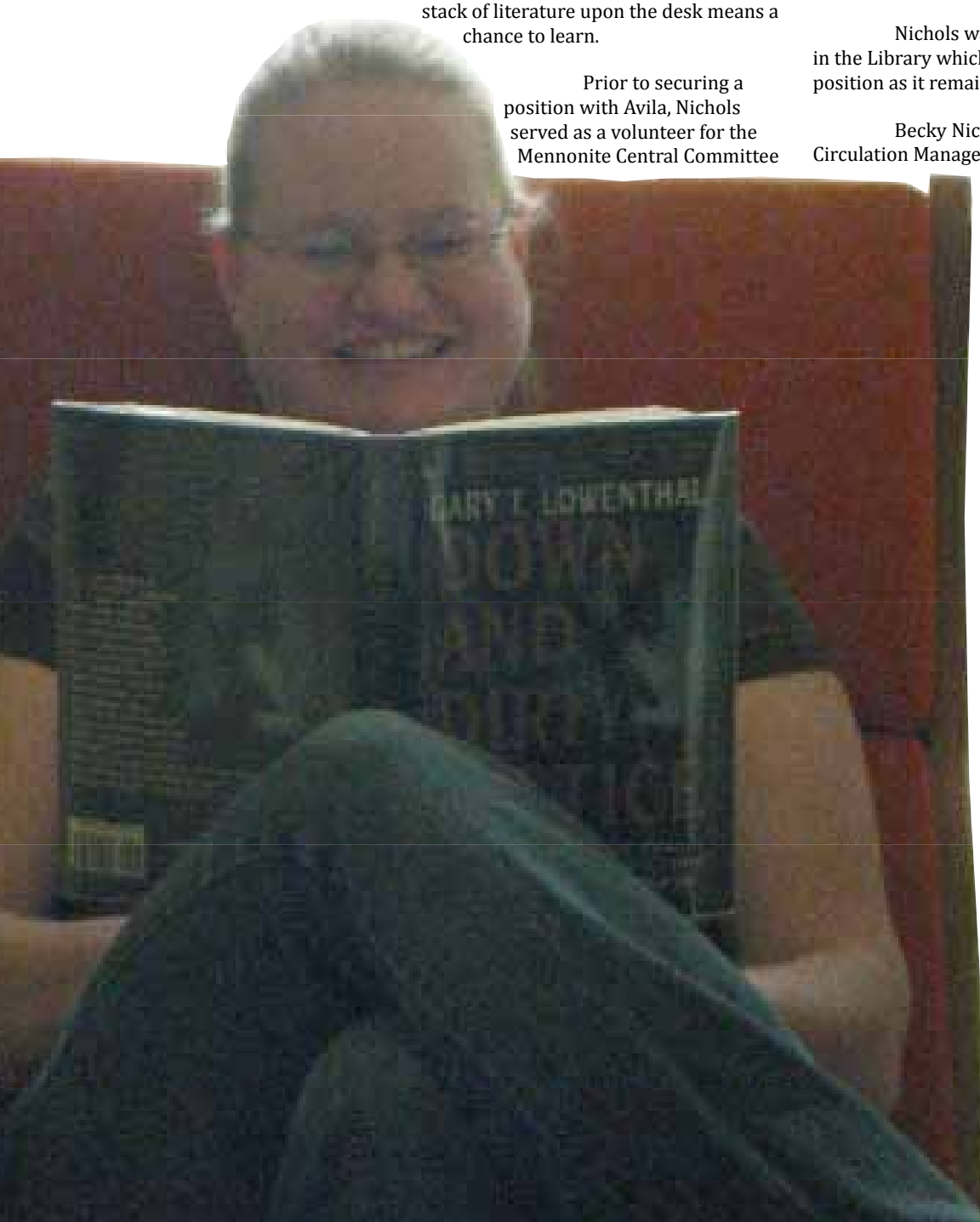
By Danielle Amey

Rebecca "Becky" Nichols might be the biggest bookworm at Avila University. Nichols is the current Circulation Manager for the Hooley-Bundschu Library located here on campus, a position she describes as developing a "curiosity about the world." For Becky, a stack of literature upon the desk means a chance to learn.

Prior to securing a position with Avila, Nichols served as a volunteer for the Mennonite Central Committee in south Florida for years of her resider HIV case manager f relocation to Kansa complete Graduate

Nichols w in the Library whic position as it remai

Becky Nic Circulation Manage



r DNA

three years. The remaining three
ncy of that state, Nichols served as an
for the same organization. The initial
s City was for employment and to
studies.

as able to secure a part-time position
h eventually turned into a full-time
ns today.

hols considers her position as
r to be a servant to the students of
Avila, much like the disciples of Jesus.

"It is about locating the
necessary and correct material needed
for each individual and going the extra
mile to help them with just that."

Biography

Home: KCMO

Pets: None

Gadget: Kitchen Aid Mixer

Website: Facebook

Restaurant: Thai House & TJ's Café

Drink: Coke

Snack: "Mini" Reese's Peanut Butter Cups

Food: Crab Keish (makes herself) or Tostino's Frozen Pizza

Charity: Sponsor a child from Rwanda, Assistant Pastor, & involved in Mission Trips

Actor/Actress: Forest Whitaker & Meryl Streep

Book: Ann of Green Gables

Blog: Mennonite Girls Can Cook

Movie: 12 Angry Men

TV Show: Stargate Universe

Perfume: Beauty

Clothes: On Sale

Makeup: Mary Kay

Accessories: Earrings

Exercise: Walking, Cycling, Canoeing, & Hiking

Where to spend an extra $50: Shoes

Phoning or Texting: Phoning

Facebook or Twitter: Both

Person to quote: Mary Chism

Brandon Johnson: "Oh The Place

By Christina Parisse

Born and raised in Northwest Iowa, Brandon Johnson is no stranger to education. From an early age Brandon was always one to step up and be involved. He attended Alta High School in Alta, Iowa where he was heavily involved in sports, 4H, Future Farmers of America, and community service.

After graduating high school in 1999, Brandon earned his Bachelor's in Arts in Communication from Buena Vista University. At Buena Vista, Brandon played football and was very involved in leadership organization and multicultural group activities. Brandon was the first in his immediate family to graduate with a bachelor degree. He then went on to earn his Master of Arts in Education from the University of Saint Mary. He will be receiving his Doctorate in Educational Leadership in spring 2012.

Brandon has worked in higher education for over seven years. He began his career as an admission representative and eventually moved up to the Director of Enrollment Management at the University of Saint Mary. He has been the Director of Undergraduate Admission at Avila for nine months and plans to remain in private higher education for the rest of his career.

Brandon currently resides in Leavenworth, Kansas with his wife, Sarah, nine-month old son, Bode, and Golden-Doodle, Reese. I interviewed Brandon and learned more about his career, interests and the "Sweet Hog of Mine" song...

Me: What have you learned most in all your years of recruiting?

Brandon: I think that you have to always put the student first regardless of pressure or needs of the institution and never forget about the student their success.

Me: Why do you love what you do?

Brandon: I love what I do because every day, every student is a new challenge and a new opportunity- working with students and families is pretty much the most rewarding thing. I know first-hand the difference private education can make it someone's life, which is why I'm really passionate about private/Christian based education. It changed my life.

Me: Did you have a teacher or coach that was an inspirational mentor to you?

Brandon: Dr. Lamoureax, one of my communication professors at BVU, believed in me...for the first time I felt like there was more to me than being an athlete and that I had potential in other arenas outside of sports, mainly academics. I am forever grateful that she touched my life.

Me: What, in your opinion, are the keys to success?

Brandon: Attitude and effort. Those are the two things in life you actually control.

Me: Do you have a favorite quote or motto?

Brandon: The Serenity Prayer:

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference."

This prayer means a lot to me. My father battled addiction his entire life but never lost his passion to be the best person he could be and leaving a positive impact on as many lives as possible.

Me: What book could you read over and over again?

Brandon: "Oh, the Places you'll Go," by Dr. Seuss. It was read at our wedding and I now read it to Bode.

Me: When you think about high school memories, what sticks out in your mind?

Brandon: (Ponders for a moment then chuckles) singing "Sweet Hog of Mine."

Me: (Attempting to hold back laughter) this is a song?

Brandon: Yes. A trio of us sang it for our high school musical called "State Fair."

Me: Very nice. If you could have any super power, what would it be?

Brandon: The ability to warp so I could go visit family and friends more regularly.

Me: What's something on your bucket list?

es You'll Go"

Brandon: Attend a Michigan – Norte Dame football game at the "Big House" in Ann Arbor. Over 100,000 fans in one place at one time…I would definitely use my warp super power to get out of the parking lot after the game though.

Me: What do you do for fun, hobbies?

Brandon: A variety of activities from golf to walking to shooting hoops, pretty much anything attached to sports.

Me: If you could trade places with anyone for a day, who would it be?

Brandon: My brother Blake; his personality and outlook on life is amazing, he lives each day to the fullest and is determine to enjoy life.

Me: What's in your CD player in your car right now?

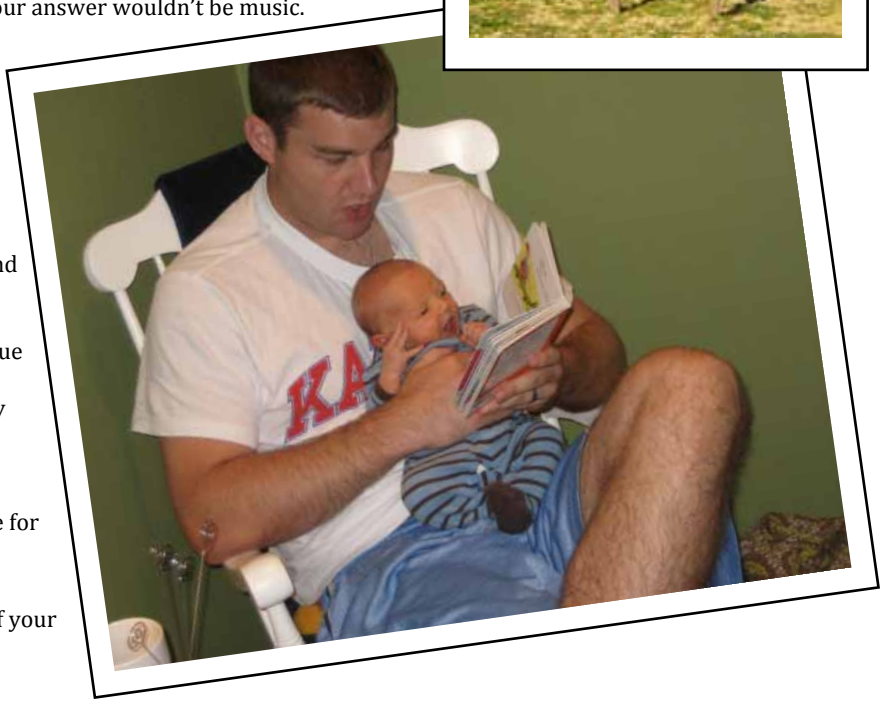
Brandon: (Laughs) Oh no... It is called the "Mentor Leader" by Tony Dungy.

Me: I had a feeling your answer wouldn't be music. What is that?

Brandon: It's a leadership style that is built around the mentorship program, investing in people personally and professionally and empowering them. It's just a style I truly believe in and continue to try to learn more about as I grow in my profession.

Me: What is the best advice you could give for college students?

Brandon: Step out of your comfort zone.



Dr. Elaine Wright heeds grandfather's advice: "Live simply so that others can simply live."

By Taneeka Hill

Born in Owensboro, Kentucky with a vow to never attend undergraduate studies there, Dr. Elaine Wright emerged as Brescia College's first graduate of Social Work. From the start of a triple major in religion, psychology, and philosophy at Rhodes College in Memphis, TN, Dr. Wright has taken life by the reins. She is still evolving as one of Avila's most influential greats. Dr. Wright's accomplishments and successes are many, and she has traveled to many countries in an effort to change the world and better lives one day at a time. Her drive made me curious to know the Elaine within Dr. Elaine R. Wright, Chair of Department of Social Work.

Me: What were your dreams as a child to become?
Dr. Elaine Wright: I wanted to be a teacher, a social worker, an educator creating change and bettering lives.

Me: Were you a problem child or little miss perfect?
Dr. Elaine Wright: Neither or all the above (while laughing)

Me: Favorite toy as a child?
Dr. Elaine Wright: My Albert Einstein teddy bear with white hair and mustache, an E=mc2 t-shirt, suspenders for grey wool pants and grey cardigan.

Me: Did you have a role model or an idol that inspired you as a youth to achieve your dream?
Dr. Elaine Wright: Both my grandmother and grandfather. My grandfather was a social worker. My grandmother was instrumental in shaping me into who I was and still am today. She taught me to believe in myself, that women are strong and can do anything and to strive to make the world a better place.

Me: Wow, such powerful support; can you give me one positive and one negative aspect from your childhood?
Dr. Elaine Wright: Positive would be my grandmothers true inspiration and heroisms. Negative would be the loss of my grandmother, who is also named Elaine, she was an amazing woman. She truly inspired me and held me accountable and taught me that giving makes this world a better place.

Me: Some of us are rebels by nature, was there a defining moment in life that made you decide that social work and social change was definitely your path?
Dr. Elaine Wright: What comes to mind is a comic book on Buddha. There was something abou
ting under that tree; the enlightenm
trees have old souls; there is someth
could climb up into a live oak and la
once traveled to Maui, Hawaii to visi

Me: Ok, fake or live plants?
Dr. Elaine Wright: Live houseplant
only. I also like to grow flowers and
have time and a well-lit backyard.

Me: Chef or kitchen challenged?
Dr. Elaine Wright: I cook most of n
and like to make things from scratch
proficient.

Me: Shoes or barefoot?
Dr. Elaine Wright: Barefoot when p

Me: Would you participate in Danci
the Stars or Celebrity Apprentice?
Dr. Elaine Wright: I haven't owned
for over 20 years.

Me: Wow! Most can't live without t
television. Why no T.V?
Dr. Elaine Wright: I see T.V as a too
abused. I don't find it the most effec
be out there doing something. I real
tive discriminatory component of te
entertained by turning the TV into a

t Siddhartha Gautama sit-
ent of people in need. Plus
ing serene about them. I
y for hours. You know I
t with the Banyan tree.

s, low maintenance ones
my own food whenever I

my own meals at home
. So, adept but not chef-

possible.

ng with

a TV

heir

l; it can be used and
tive tool for me. I'd rather
ly don't care for the nega-
levision. I would be better
fish tank.

Me: What would I see if I opened the door of your refrigerator?
Dr. Elaine Wright: Whatever my farmer has provided for me that week, eggs, spinach, fruit, cheese, wasabi, my mom's home-made mustard and spicy Hungarian tomato paste.

Me: Animal Lover?
Dr. Elaine Wright: All are welcome, cats, dogs, mice, hamsters, guinea pigs, chameleons, newts, snakes, etc. I would be keen on having a home with land and a lot of animals, including horses.

Me: Any advice to offer those of us aspiring to be as successful as you?
Dr. Elaine Wright: Take advantage of every opportunity.

Me: Is that why you are leaving Avila to pursue a career opportunity at Tulane in Louisiana?
Dr. Elaine Wright: The work must continue. I have a great opportunity to combine those things I love most, helping to better lives and working with international students. I will be Director of International Programs at Tulane University School of Social Work.

Me: We will miss you dearly. What is your motto on life?
Dr. Elaine Wright: My grandfather used to say, "Live simply so that others can simply live."
Life is a gift, there is so much we can do and should be doing to help better lives. No one should be struggling.

Yohei, the quiet yet witty student

By Hayley Keith

"I always knew I wanted to come to America. I came here because I wanted to make films," he said, "I wanted to go to L.A. or New York, but I came to Avila because it was much cheaper." It seems that each year Avila is able to provide opportunities for students like Yohei Ishihama, an artistic, first year student from Japan. Unlike the big city schools, Avila is small which means there is more room for one-on-one learning. Hopefully this gives him an opportunity for future plans. Yohei is enjoying Avila and says he is looking forward to next semester when he gets to move into Thompson Hall with his buddies.

As said before, Yohei is a film major and when he graduates from Avila, he would like to go to film school to continue on his movie-making career. But not only is Yohei a filmmaker, but also an artist. Back in Japan, Yohei has his own band that actually performed in front of his high school. He could be considered a celebrity back in his hometown! He is currently translating one of his songs for his Editing and Audio class. He wants to produce the song and make a music video out of it. He's got the talent and the brains for show business! The only bad quality about Yohei is that he is very lazy.
Yohei is known to be somewhat of a quiet guy, but during his interview he opened up and shared some interesting information. Some of the questions were random and others were basic.

Me: If you could switch places with a celebrity, who would it be and why?
Yohei: Umm, I am going to be a celebrity.
Me: Oh, you're the celebrity? That's some confidence!
Me: What would you do if you won the lottery?
Yohei: How much money?
Me: Umm, let's say about 4 million dollars
Yohei: I would probably make a movie, action movie.

Those are just a couple of the questions he was asked, but boy is he witty! So students, staff, faculty, etc, if you don't already know Yohei, get acquainted with him because he is brilliant and has some great short films that everybody should see.

Don Blitzer, a suprising man of tuxedos and tails

By Josh Grimes

Don Blinzer is one of the technicians at Avila University, during his busy schedule I was able to grab him for a moment between his time building the new coffee shop in Winfield and shoot him a few questions.

Where do you feel more at home?
On campus, I love remodeling stuff. I built my own house 20 years ago, as I used to be an Iron worker.
What's the fastest you have ever been caught speeding?
I have only got 2 tickets in my lifetime.
- going 43 in a 35 going downhill
- The second I was going 35 in a 25 in the winter on my motorcycle, I just wanted to get home.

You dream of owning…?
An island
What is your favorite food and drink?
My favorite food is a tenderloin sandwich; my favorite drink has to craft beers
What do you like most about your job?
I love working with my hands, as my job is never the same it changes on a daily basis
What is the most expensive thing in your wardrobe?
I do own a tuxedo with tails
Are you married? How did you get engaged?
Yes, my wife actually asked me
What is your favorite word and why?
Moron, because it applies to so many people
What is your best bodily feature?
My height
Do you think alien abductions are real or fake?
I think they are real, were not the only intelligent life form out there

What places do you have left on your bucket list?
We travel on one cruise each year, but I guess I would have to say South America around the Amazon or rain forest
What do you enjoy doing the most?
Going on cruises, sitting around drinking beer relaxing talking; having a good time
What are you currently reading?
My e-mails, I don't read very often if I do read it's a service manual, technical book, or I'm either reading nothing special on a plane trip. I would rather watch a movie than read the book

Shared experiences create a bond an

By Emily Heid

After another late night of slaving, my eyes hang half open, with bags like ink spots permanently staining the tender skin below them. I am tired, which also means: I'm grumpy, AND I have a major project due today. As I walk into Dallavis, windblown and disheveled, I have a scowl on my face. However, once I pass through the second set of double doors, my outlook instantly changes. Just like any other Avila student who ambles by, I am greeted by the building's energy supply, Janine Urness, and my bad mood changes.

Having been the building's office manager – aka The Boss – for eight years, Janine is a pro at her job. She knows everything and everyone and I have yet to ask a question that Janine cannot answer. She arrives early, stays late, and has a key to everything…there is no door that she cannot open (both figuratively and literally.) I had an opportunity to catch up with Janine and find out more about her life and involvements.

Janine was born in Kansas City and was a member of a large family consisting of 7 brothers and 3 sisters, her arrival being #9. She remembers many happy hours being part of this enormous family, especially having fun with them. "I will always remember water fights and chasing each other around the house," Janine said. "We all tried to get on the roof, just to get the best angle for the line of fire for our water war. The best part is that no one planned these fights, they just happened. "

> "We can talk with each other about what is going on with our parents, vent, not vent, laugh, and seek suggestions. It is those shared experiences that create a bond and trust."

Dotty Hamilton, Dean of the Communication Department, shared that "It was clear after the second interview that she was a perfect fit for this school. The first interview was a basic question and answer interview, a way for us to weed people out. In the second interview, everyone had to complete a task like attaching a Word document to an email, which was still novel at that time. [Laughing] I remember I had Janine do something completely different. There was this office supply cabinet that was so chaotic and messy from the previous office manager that no could find anything. I had Janine organize it. It took her two hours, but she made it spotless and never complained about the nature of the task. I knew after that Janine would be a perfect fit. And our cabinet has been spotless ever since!"

Janine remembers applying for her job at Avila. "Actually, I did not realize that Avila was here. I saw the job in the paper and applied. I needed a less stressful job at the time. It was the best choice I could asked about what moment at Avila stic sponded, "There is not just one momen Avila and especially Dallavis is the feel shared experiences. So many of the st aging parents. We can talk with each o going on with our parents, vent, not ve suggestions. It is those shared experie bond and trust."

But it is not Janine's organiza ability to keep the Communication and in a Zen state that makes her profile st a funny, kind hearted, protective, easy who is always fashionably dressed. Sh value of humor. "One morning," Janie e was decorated with film strips in the d it is very interesting in Dallavis- you ne will see when you come in after a week of the Art and Design students drew ch Art faculty and n leading into the As soon as I cam laughing. They and fun to see!" picture was the

Probably I al and remarkab is her family life same man for ne being introduce Janine has accom sible" by today's standards. Her secon her son, a senior at Rockhurst Univers ating this year with a BS in Bio-chemis Physics medicine. Janine herself has c at Avila this past December. She doubl BS in Health Care Services and a BA in current plans are to begin her Masters Development in the fall.

But what I love best about Ja ways has a smile on her face. She is alv an upbeat mood. At least once an hou heard throughout the building. Rarely a student or faculty member stopping obtain a healthy dose of advice. Howe is that she always makes a person feel stop whatever she is doing to talk, ans simply make the person feel better tha Simply put, Janine is not only the life li source for Dallavis, but also its heart a

d trust

l have made." When
cks out, Janine re-
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l Art Departments
ory worthy. She is
going, kind person
e also enjoys the
explains, "my office
doorway. Sometimes
ever know what you
kend. Recently two
haracterizations of
me on the glass doors
Art department.
e in, I just started
were quite creative
Side note, Janine's
largest on the door!

her most inspiration-
ble quality of Janine
. Married to the
early 30 years after
d by a mutual friend,
mplished "the impos-
d accomplishment is
ity. He will be gradu-
stry with a minor in
ompleted her degree
le majored with a
Psychology. Her
in Organizational

nine is that she al-
ways positive and in
r, her laughter can be
is her office without
by to say hello or
ver, her best quality
important. She will
wer questions, or
n when they arrived.
ne, and the energy
nd soul.

Dr. Charlene Gould building relationships

By Janet Banks

Dr. Charlene Gould, PhD., Dean of College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences which she called (C.L.A.S.S.) for short is a very patient and steady woman who takes her position very seriously as the Dean, not with an iron fist, but in a way that allows her to use her skills as a negotiator of sorts, because she is all about relationships and building relationships with those around her. You can say she's definitely a people person. She never forces anyone to be something they are not, she treats her colleagues accordingly and let's them use their strengths where they may flourish.

Dr. Gould has such a positive attitude about life, her job, and family; even her extended family at Avila University. To listen to her or watch her, the positivism can't help but rub off on those that come in contact with her. Dr. Gould stated, "I am an optimist, and I don't like to waste a lot of time on negativity which we all know can pull the whole department down", but when things start to go south, Dr. Gould has the attitude, demeanor and the right words to speak to that particular situation, to get whatever is going on back on to the right track. She used shoveling snow as a metaphor for her job. "She stated, some days the snow is heavier, some days its lighter, and some days the sun is shining but I keep shoveling until the load lightens and try to make it fun. It was interesting that she would use an element such as snow to describe what she does on a daily. It was telling about the type of person Dr. Gould is, and she likes challenges.

Dr. Gould feels her job is productive and meaningful. She said, "Its work, and can be hectic, but she tries to make it fun, and she said, "it is truly a blessing to be working, especially in the economic times we are in." She also enjoys working with all the different people in the college. She stated, "The four different branches of the College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences, and the diversity that is within those four branches and within the multi-disciplines it lends to making my day different from day-to-day. She said "Joy is work, and you have to work to be joyful." The enthusiasm was bouncing off the walls as she stated " At the risk of being a Polly-Anna, being an optimist is what keeps me going, and she said, "I am the only one in my family that wakes up a in the morning with a chipper attitude, and I found out through studies later that each person is wired that way, while her children grimace she said, and I told them they can either wake up cheerful or wake up grumpy, it's all in the way a person

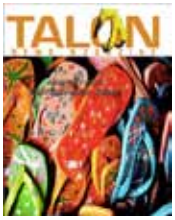
interprets life and if grumpy defines that person, is a waste according to Dr. Gould to go that route.

Before Dr. Gould was the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences she was the Director of Theatre and she has a background in Theatre. Dr. Gould enjoys the Arts and she stated, "I am lucky to have always from a child to now being a grown woman, married with children to have had a family that has supported her love of the Arts.

Dr. Gould is a nurturer at heart and she brings to work what she gives her family, and gives the same thing to her extended family, and that's to listen, give advise, love, and patience. She talked about having an agenda when she gets to work, but she sets aside her agenda to allow others in the College where she is the Dean to get theirs taken care of. It's not that she doesn't take care of her own work it's the concerned nature of Dr. Gould to put others before herself. That is the selfless nature that Dr. Gould possesses.

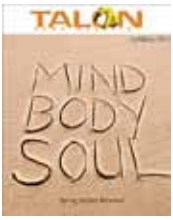
It is a joy to listen and watch Dr. Charlene Gould talk about her family, her job, and how she balances both of them with grace. She is a very energetic person that loves what she does as a wife, mother, and Dean. She is a uniquely genuine woman who is unassuming and doesn't have to jump up and down to say 'here I am', she is the perfect person for the job of Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences because you can see her presence all over it.

Talon Spring Cover Winners



First Place: Janet Banks

Second Place: Josh Grimes



Third Place: Janet Banks

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